

Sinclair Broadcast Group's recent actions have illustrated the dangers to localism caused by media consolidation as well the huge issue of interfering in a public election by broadcasting clearly partisan, skewed "news".

While I believe in freedom of private expression, such as the film "Fahrenheit 911" this past summer, which did not disguise itself as news and required pay-per-view access in theatres. If it were broadcast on the open airwaves, it would fall under the category of a film/entertainment. There are many other political movies out there that have been created, but none of them pretend to be news. Sinclair's use of the open, free airwaves to broadcast skewed political content the week before the election as "new" is a heinous violation of their FCC license.

I think of Howard Stern's recent brush with the FCC as a clear indication that FCC policy regarding decency and democracy on the public, free-access airwaves is definitely violated by Sinclair here. If they want to broadcast this "news" it should be pay-per-view or subscription-based access, right?

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for Wall Street or private political goals, bad for freedom and democracy. It's vital that we continue to see real people from our own communities and news free of "yellow" journalism and private interest propaganda disguising as real news.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them, especially regarding news reporting and propaganda. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. It should include a review of their programming for violations of tighter regulations about propaganda and political coverage. Thank you.